1: Petrullo E-3 (1939-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

a pole. In general, therefore, organized play for child or adult is hardly present.

WAR

The Yaruros did not speak much of war. None of their legends make any reference to it except in one case which says that they were killed by the "Racionales" and that they retaliated.[6] The known historical sources say nothing except Father Gumilla's account, which makes reference to the pacification of the "Saruri."

MORAL ATTITUDES

On the subject of conduct, the outlook on life and the organization of life values, we must distinguish between theory and practice. The former grows out of reflection and represents the intellectualization of the universe as seen without much reference to practical life. The second springs from the social and economic relationships and the fusing of individual ends and purposes into the purposes and ends of the group, whereas the first is not strictly controlled by custom and practical needs. Both exist among the Yaruros. For the first we have to turn to the shaman, who in addition to being a religious leader, a savant, is also a moralist; and for the second we turn to the entire social group and need to watch it in its behavior.

In reading over the early account of the aborigines of the region, among which we must presumably include Yaruros, we gather that their moral concepts were different from those of the Christians, but perhaps neither better nor worse in practice. It must be doubted, however, whether a number of practices attributed to the Yaruros are authentic. We read, for instance, that a number of the aborigines were patricides, and we are given a picture of the male children, on reaching adolescence, rising against the fathers through lust for the mother. Patricide is an abhorrent crime and the motive behind it is equally abhorrent. It is to be doubted whether patricide, or even lesser acts, such as beating the father, were ever practiced, except in sporadic cases such as may occur in any society. It hardly seems possible that women were the cause of it when it is known, as it is known today, that mating and extramarital relationships are very strictly controlled by tradition and social training. Disregarding, therefore, such allusions to the moral life of the primitive peoples of the Orinoco, let us turn to our informants for an understanding of their present mode of life. The

[6] It would appear probable that the nomadic Yaruros were too weak to ever develop any warlike spirit.

Most direct

622 [191 177] commands, in so far as I was able to observe, were made in Spanish![4] — essentially in acculturation contexts. In general, they concerned village care, small services, and the like. No occasion was observed of commanding older men, except for a married youth of 19, who was the youngest adult male in the village. The two or three commands he received during my stay went unnoticed, and, in one or two instances, were even directly contravened. The capitans of the Cinaruco river group and of Palmarito de Guachara both consistently complained that no one paid enough attention to them, and the Palmarito chief complained that he never was kept [571] sufficiently informed of events by his people. The fact is that people do pretty much as they choose in all important decision-making situations which do not involve the community at large, or the relationship of some member of the community or the entire group to outsiders.[5] In the former situation, the chief serves as a consultative funnel through which the community discussion pours back and forth until the community achieves some clear but unstated consensus upon which 622 648 [354] community members can act, individually of course. Only in the situations dealing with outside groups does the Yaruro capitanship emerge as a more developed status which might metaphorically be described as a position similar to that of a minister of foreign relations. In behalf of his group, he talks with any representatives of outside groups, especially if they are non-Yaruro, and acts as gatherer of information and as channel of communication between the community and the outside entity. Even this is weakened, however, since it applies more by courtesy than by fact among the Yaruro themselves, and other members of the community may perform the same function even if to a somewhat smaller degree. It is also weakened in that no Yaruro is prevented from acting on his own with respect to non-Yaruro outsiders, and, in fact, many Yaruro do establish their own relationships with outsiders as a number of instances attested. Indeed, the rights of the individual members of the society to make their own decisions, at least internally if not also ●[682] externally, is insisted on. In one instance, a chief who took it upon himself to

[4] Commands and other stress situations, which generally appear to be uncongenial to the Yaruro and more overt as the people have been more subject to acculturation, seem to elicit from the Yaruro Spanish responses rather than Yaruro ones. It is as though it [578] were not fitting to utter commands or express anger in Yaruro. Thus, the few times [152] noisy altercation was heard among the Cinaruco Yaruro, the language used was Spanish. [191] The chief's commands and his overt anger were always expressed in Spanish, even if he had just before been speaking in Yaruro. Though anger may often be felt, it is not shown if the participants are expressing themselves in Yaruro. Thus, the chief scolded one of the village boys for riding one of the recently acquired burros — in Spanish; he ordered a 19-year old young man to do some task — in Spanish; he complained of the actions of one of the village elders in taking on the job of guide without first consulting him (though he would certainly have permitted it) — in Spanish.

[5] Cf. Leeds, 1960 a, with respect to the place of individual action in Yaruro society. [181 114] Though there is individual action, choice, and responsibility, these are all carried out as an aspect of community organization and essentially with community affirmation. A person is not an individual set in counterpoint to his society — there is no polarity of individual-society, as we, in our culture, generally seem to conceive. Individualism in the latter sense does not exist among the Yaruro. The Yaruro should not be mistaken for an individualistic culture, as, I suspect, several of the cultures described as individualistic in Mead, 1937, should not have been.

3:Leeds E-5 (1958) 1962 SS19 Yaruro SS19

represent his people to the outside world without consultation and to make arbitrary decisions for them inside the community — mainly in his own interest — was, with the consent of the community, assassinated by one of the members, now in excellent standing in that community as a respected shaman. The chief in question had stepped beyond the bounds designated for his status. In sum, the position of chief, even though formally recognized by Yaruro society and reinforced by formal recognition and appointment by Venezuelan authorities, is feeble as an institution and as a status.[6] It is our hypothesis that ecological conditions of Yaruro life determine the form of the chieftainship in such a way that its stronger institutionalization would be impossible, and we turn to this question now.

III

Yaruro subsistence activities[7] comprise swiddening, gathering, pig herding, hunting and fishing, mentioned in the order of their importance as contributors to the total food supply as measured in calories.[8] Horticulture probably provides 60—70% of the total annual food supply. The horticulture practiced is characteristic of tropical forest slash-and-burn gardens, with a slow rotation of plots in order to permit soil renewal and weed control. Trees are cut, at present with steel axes and formerly, apparently, with axes of bone or shell, and then burnt. Occasional fences are roughly made of the logs to keep out pigs. Bitter manioc (*Manihot utilissima*),[9] in several varieties, is the main crop, though sweet manioc (*Manihot aipi*), also in several varieties, is planted too, as are corn, bananas, sugar cane — each in several varieties — and a number of lesser crops such as melons, squashes, pumpkins, pineapples, sweet potatoes, and yautia or ocumo (*Xanthosoma sagittifolium*). Crops are planted with a digging stick which may also be used in harvesting. Gardens are weeded, once only, early in the growth of the crops. Other than clearing, the only soil preparation is the construction of hills for planting bananas. This is done by burning hills made by a certain species of ants (*huachaquero*). The hills, which are quite wide and low, are filled with organic matter enriching the soil.[10] Harvesting is aided with baskets for carrying the crops. Baskets contain about half a bushel or less. No fertilization, no terracing, no drainage, no irrigation, no extensive turning of the soil is done.

The gathered resources include a number of roots, particularly changuango, changuanito, and guapo (*Maranta arundinacea*);[11] varied fruits, especially that of

[6] Professor Benjamin N. Nelson informs me that in medieval Spain, village communities had an official, also called *capitan*, whose function was to treat with state functionaries representing the world beyond the village community's frontier. It is possible that the Yaruro capitan, and many others in Venezuela, are an acculturative transfer of this office to tribal groups. In the case of the Yaruro, this would have happened some 250—300 years ago.

[7] The use, here, of the terms 'activity', 'tasks', 'techniques', 'tools', 'resources', and 'habitat' corresponds to the definitions given in Leeds, 1960 b.

[8] Cf. Leeds, 1961, which gives this data in detail and describes the habitat and horticulture *in extenso*.

[9] Native terms for these crops are given *ibid.*

[10] *Ibid.*, note 9, contains data on soil values.

[11] Identifications are from Pittier, 1926.